

FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

February 26, 2015

Regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on Thursday, February 26, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Finance Committee Room, #112 with the following members present: M. Iwanowicz, J. Denneen, J. Burke, A. Ragosta, D. Bruce, J. McDermott, A. Walsh, S. Lawson, T. Williams A. Healy, J. Lowre, M. Trudell, and D. Crowley. Members absent were C. Lane and P. Hinton. Also in attendance was Town Administrator j. Johnson, Fire Chief T. Bailey, Sewer and Water Commissioners W. Abbott, and J. Spillane, Police Chief R. Stillman and DPW Director R. O'Brien.

7:00 p.m. Quorum being present, the meeting was called to order by the Chairman D. Bruce.

May 4, 2015 Spring Annual Town Meeting

Articles 7 and 8 – Water and Sewer Enterprise Funds – Speaking to these articles was Superintendent of Water and Sewer R. Mattson.

Article 7 – Water - Operational and maintenance budget- no significant changes to this budget with the exception of 50% of the Superintendent's salary has been moved to the Sewer Budget. Staff in this department includes 10 public works and two clerical positions. The Superintendent ,the Commissioners secretary and the Assistant Superintendent are covered 50% in this budget and 50% in the Sewer Budget. Salary requested is \$906,276. Expense portion is proposed to increase by 4.4% (\$66,250) and are directly related to the requirements of the Water Management Act Program of the DEP and the maintenance of the Jarvis Farm. It is anticipated that a proposed position for Jarvis Farm will be split with Parks Department. This is a part time position and will work April – October. Water usage under DEP presently is 3.35 million gallons per day, DEP is proposing to limit the Town to 2.5 million gallons. Usage for commercial and industrial is very complex. Commissioners are looking at one day per week for outside watering. Projected rate increase for the purchase of the Sharon Country Day (Jarvis Farm) is 12.2%.

Under Capital Budget, they are looking into distribution system investigation/pipeline improvement Design (\$200,000) (West Walpole), Pump Station monitoring and control System upgrade (\$35,000), Pump Station intrusion alarm and security fencing and gate repair/replacement (\$75,000). This will be paid out of Retained Earnings. In the future, they would like to replace cast iron pipes. They have a plan for 8 year replacement. The State or the Federal Government has not yet mandated that asbestos pipes be replaced.

The lining of the pipes is more of an issue. Town has 14 miles of asbestos pipe and Water Department does tests for asbestos each year.

Discussion of the rehab of the Old Post Road water tank was discussed,. Rehab won't solve the problem of water pressure in the area. Life expectancy is 30 years. Improvements will be needed by 2 years, this will come before the next Spring Town Meeting (2016) The installation of a booster pump station will be at an additional cost. Problem with blocking the antennas and what to do with the building will need to be resolved.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Water Department Salaries in the amount of \$906,276, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) (Unanimous)

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Water Department Operational Expenses in the amount of \$1,570,305, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley for Favorable Action on the Water Department Capitol Projects in the amount \$310,000, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Article 8 – Sewer - Town Administrator provided the Committee with an updated Sewer Budget. There is an increase of \$84,227 in the rates and the LTD Principal debt payments for FY16. MWRA has notified the Town that they are proceeding with Phase 8 and 9 of their I & I program. The increase in rates from the MWRA will not be known till June, but the 3.9% increase has to be appropriated. There is an increase in equipment maintenance contracts due for two additional pump stations at High Oaks Subdivision and Walpole Park South. Department consists of three public works employees, one clerical and ½ of the salary for the Commissioners secretary, Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent.

Septic Facility update – This facility is doing very well, 75% of the delivery's are from out of Town, it generated fees of \$117,000 and cost \$55,000 for salaries. Canton facility is closed and Mr. Mattson doesn't feel they will reopen. This is the only facility in the area. Town bills the septic haulers.

Capital projects are funded through retained earnings and they are requesting a pick up truck in the amount of \$42,000, Equipment and building improvements at the Septic Receiving Facility in the amount of \$180,000 (This facility was built in 1991) and Sewer system expansion feasibility review in the amount of \$225,000. This will be for a review of a previous study and will prioritize areas of towns, mostly small lots. 75% of the project will come from abutters. Total capital request of \$447,000.

Discussion ensued on taking on additional debt rather than using the retained earnings. Rates are favorable now, the use of the retained earnings could be at a future date . Commissioners will look into this and advise the Committee. Sewer and Water Commissioner will be before the FinCom with Capital Budget on March 19,2015. Town Administrator, R. Mattson, Superintendent, M. Thompson, Finance Director and J. Cuneo will meet and review the numbers.

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by J. Lowre for Favorable Action on the Sewer Department Salaries in the amount of \$282,411, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on the Sewer Department Operational Expenses in the amount of \$3,787,590, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by S. Lawson for Favorable Action on Sewer Department Capital Projects in the amount of \$447,000, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Article 7 – Water Department Operations

MOTION MADE by D. Crowley, Seconded by J. Denneen for Favorable Action on the Water Department Operations Budget in the amount of \$5,663,712, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Article 8 – Sewer Department Operations

MOTION MADE by D. Crowley, Seconded by J. Denneen for Favorable Action on the Sewer Department Operation Budget in the amount of \$5,175,698, Motion Passed (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Minutes

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley to approve the minutes of February 12, 2015, Motion Passed (12-0-1) (J. Lowre abstained) (13 voting)

School Budget

Discussion ensued on the School Budget. Any questions that the members have should be e-mail to the Town Administrator. Committee had requested information for the March 2 meeting with the School Department on salaries, but have not received it.

Televised Meetings

Discussion ensued with the members on possibly televising the Finance Committee meetings. Members felt that it sends out the wrong message to only televise meetings with the School Committee. Televising meetings provides for an opportunity to discuss mandates and what the real issues are. Every board and committee should be televised, it should not be exclusive to the School Department, it is a consistency issue. It was noted that no other group, aside from the School Committee, has asked to have its meetings with the Finance Committee televised. S. Lawson stated that she believed that all of the Finance Committee meetings should be televised so that our process is completely transparent and available to the community. Town Administrator spoke to a problem with televising meetings, Finance Committee Room and the Library are not set up like the Main Meeting Room for this. He will consult with the Cable TV on what can be done.

MOTION MADE by D. Bruce, Seconded by M. Trudell, that if the Finance Committee is asked to have a meeting televised by a Board or Committee, and if a room is available, would the members be in favor, Motion Passed (8-5-0) (M. Iwanowicz, M. Trudell, T. Williams, J. Denneen, and J. Burke) (13 voting)

MOTION MADE by J. Denneen, Seconded by D. Crowley to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m., Motion Passed, (13-0-0) (13 voting) Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Clare P. Abril
Clerk